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Date: 11.2.54.

W/Obr. Abd. El-Latif Beydady
Minister of War,
Cairo.

Sir,

From the 8th to the 10th of ^{February} 1954, I visited at your request the Navy and the Ports & Harbors at Alexandria. The ^{inspections} ~~inspections~~ with the Chief of the Naval Staff, (Admiral) ^{Sulayman} ~~Sulayman~~ ^{Khan} ~~Khan~~ and the Director-General, Ports & Harbors Administration, (Colonel) ^{El} ~~El ^{Ad} ~~Ad~~ were mainly conducted by myself alone. The inspections were also attended in addition by the representatives of the P&H and the Naval Workshops, by (A. Gervais) ^{Shakidi} ~~Shakidi~~ and the Engineers, Mekynok and Prenti, Experts in the Ministry.~~

As only 2-3 days were at our disposal, it is impossible immediately to give you a final picture, in spite of the fact that exhaustive discussions with all the parties concerned as well as careful inspections took place. I should therefore be grateful if you would consider this report as a first step and as preliminary, more especially as I have not yet received the detailed documents which the naval authorities promised to send me. Separate reports with definite conclusions will follow. However, certain facts have been established, which indicate to us the course we should pursue in our future inspections and planning. As regards the present results, they can be summarized as follows:

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Port & Light

Just as in the case of Kh. El-Madinet, while not wanting to neglect, the Port & Light certainly do not have at their disposal modern plants or mechanical installations. The machines they possess are obsolete, but not to such an extent that they cannot be fully utilized for naval planning, especially if certain repairs and additions are made. It is really surprising what excellent work is being accomplished with the old installations now available. This is no doubt due to efficient management, to capable engineers and to really excellent expert workmen.

The P&L employ in all (in Alexandria, Suez and Port-Said) some 3500 employees and labourers, including 10 engineers, 20 assistant engineers and some 240 skilled workers. In the Civil engineering sector, there are 29 engineers with 37 assistant engineers.

According to information supplied by the Director-General, the budget amounts to LE 1,500,000. --, while the work-turnover does not exceed LE 1,000,000. --. This very low turnover, when compared with the number of employees and labourers present shows already that the P&L plants are made very little use of; in fact 75% of their working capacity remains idle. In connection with the work done by the P&L, some 700 engineers from the Civil Corps were allocated to the P&L, but have not been given any work to do.

The plant is particularly deficient in modernised conveyors installations, especially cranes. Moreover there is no proper Department for design and development. As regards the special Civil Engineering Section, it seems well manned.

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The Machine Shop is equipped with all the machines necessary for the production of casting operations, extending grinding and production of gears. The power driving devices on the machines are unpractical. The average age of the machines varies between 30 and 35 years. Maintenance is good. A proper tool-shop is lacking, also grinding machines and special machines for gears and for heat treatment.

The heavy metal shop is old, but in good condition; it contains well-skilled workers, but a larger welding installation is missing.

The furnace is of small range with 3 furnaces of 3-4 tons. Only cast-iron and bronze can be produced in it. Forging machines and installations for sand-forming are missing.

In the forging shop the performance is very good. It contains well experienced workers. There are 3 forging hammers with a 300-400 kg mm. Heating is effected on open fire. The forging of large pieces of steel and alloy steel is impossible.

The heavy assembly is made in the open air, the necessary cranes and transport installations are on the whole existing.

The wood workshop contains modern machinery, but has no work.

Social welfare installations for the workers are not existent.

Briefly, therefore, we have: good management, good engineers, good specialized workers, old installations, but, in spite of this, good performance. There is a lack of orders and, as I can see, also of financial possibilities. The KZL have practically no stores. The stocks in their stores mainly consist of obsolete material. They are

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Ships are not able to begin working on repair as soon as they receive their orders, because they are obliged first of all to arrange for the provision of the required spare-parts and even the necessary material. It is logical that the RFL are not able to complete the repair work therefore in reasonable time and to reasonable costs. In addition, the management must, according to their own declarations work for months to overcome all the Government routine formalities. Certain examples were cited to us which showed that, owing to red tape, several months elapsed before they could make small purchases, involving a few millions worth of goods. Certain ships of the Navy are just lying there idle, because the required material is neither available in the stores, nor can it be provided. Such a state of affairs, of course renders it impossible for a reasonable economic management to exist, in addition to greatly increasing the operational costs, reducing efficiency, slowing the work and gradually demoralizing the workers.

Another problem is the question of the dry-dock, which is at present reserved for use by the Navy three quarters of the year, thus being unavailable for private navigation lines. It remains to be considered whether it would be necessary and useful to provide a new dry-dock, in order to render the RFL really efficient.

What should therefore be done?

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What Should Navy Workshops Do?

1. As I have already stated, I can at present only submit a preliminary report. I suggest that the main points should be thoroughly examined, in order to be able to submit final reports or suggestions.
2. Special stress should be laid on the necessity of examining the question of financial administration. The NAL must be placed in a position to handle its financial affairs, in order not to lose the advantages of the Government's position. In addition, the management authority as in the case of other Government workshops, is allowed to adopt the methods of private industry by securing similar powers in financial matters. Otherwise, all initiative would be annihilated by red tape.
3. The NAL must receive more orders, to utilize their capacities. They could first of all be entrusted with the repairs which the Navy needs (and there are many occasions and necessities for such repairs). Moreover they could be charged with the construction of small naval units. I shall have more to say about this matter, later in my report also about the form in which such orders for construction should be carried out.

First of all, here is a short report regarding the Naval Workshops.

The present naval workshops cannot seriously be considered as proper workshops. As far as space is concerned they are too small,

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however they are not to be used for the purpose of
preferably had been an independent study. In any
case, the most serious considerations are now at hand.

The most important question, which is yet to be
reached is the question as to whether it is really necessary for
the Navy to have its own workshops, which have been
suggested. I am of the opinion that such a suggestion would only be
reasonable if repair work had to be performed. Indeed for financial
reasons it would be impractical, if not impossible, to erect new
work shops. Instead, it is not necessary; it would be better to
recondition the existing workshops, which are still in use, as for
instance the workshops of the Navy or of the Military Service. This would
save money as well as costly experiments, and would give the existing
workshops an economic basis. It would also ensure continued employment
for the workmen who are already serving.

The second problem of the Navy, which needs urgent decision,
is the question of the maintenance and repair of ships. It would be
hardly possible to carry out both these tasks to the fullest extent
within a short time. A systematic working plan should be drawn up,
and this should be confined only to the ships which are well worth
the material and the funds to spend on them.

It is just as urgently necessary to take a rapid decision as
to how the building program of the Navy can and should be carried
through. The simplest way, i.e. to buy a new fleet, is impossible
mainly for financial reasons. In my opinion we should - at least in
order to secure without delay a few serviceable naval units (including

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frogmen) - provide for a building program for Motor-Torpedo-boats, Gunboats, Landing Craft (LSTs...), as well as for torpedoes, Mines, Minelayers and Minesweepers. Of course these would not form a real fleet, but compared with the present situation - they would at least provide us with a few units which are capable for action.

What should therefore be done?

1. The Chief of the Naval Staff should be requested to submit a report showing what workshops, in his opinion, it is absolutely necessary to erect within his administration, what funds would be necessary for this purpose and within what period these workshops could be completed and start work. After taking a final decision in this connection, the other naval workshops which are in a state of erection and not necessary in the naval administration, should be cancelled and any further work and expenditure should be stopped immediately.
2. The Chief of Staff should moreover state which ships and boats should, in his opinion, be reconditioned or repaired, what expenditure would be necessary for this purpose and when this work could be completed.
3. In addition, the Chief of Staff should submit a building program within the limits indicated above (Type and number of ships, armament, Type and number of Torpedoes, Mines, Etc.)

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4. In addition to the special workshops which should remain within the administration of the Navy, a Working Group should be formed within the limits described above, in order to administer the repair and Maintenance work as well as the building of new vessels and torpedoes, etc. This Group should be headed by the Director-General of P&L and should include P&L, the Khedivial Mail and some special factories in Alexandria, the first and foremost a competent foreign firm. This foreign firm would have to provide special drawings of the vessels and their armament, technical help in design and production, some of the parts (for instance engines), the required material and models, if necessary. The working group would also have to carry out locally the repair work and the rebuilding. I recommend that the Director-General of P&L should be requested to submit his proposals in this connection (I have already thoroughly discussed this question with him).

Of course the Experts are ready to cooperate, both as regards proposals and execution.

The condition of the Navy is such, that no more time should be lost. I therefore earnestly recommend that a precise timetable should be laid down for the submission of proposals and reports as well as for the execution of the program. This timetable should be strictly adhered to and controlled.

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Cheerful cooperation by all the authorities concerned is essential for the successful execution of this project, especially the Navy. I therefore recommend that another discussion should take place between the Chief of Staff Navy and myself, before a final decision is taken on the subject by the Ministry. Unfortunately it was impossible for me, after the inspection had been completed, to discuss the matter again with the Chief of the Naval Staff.

S/ W. Young

Dr. Wilhelm Voas.

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